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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

30 April 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: Col. Goodpastor, White House

SUBJECT : USAF Position re Implications of Rehearsals for Soviet May Day Air Parade

1. A briefing presented in the Pentagon on 29 April by General Hal Watson, Director of the Air Technical Intelligence Center, contained the following significant observations:

- A formation of 12 Soviet four-engine jet heavy bombers and two of the new four-engine turboprop aircraft of heavy bomber size have participated in pre-parade practices.

- This indicates that design development for the jet "heavy" probably began in 1950 with a prototype being tested during 1952.

- The first production model of this plane was probably completed in March 1954 by a factory on the outskirts of Moscow.

- Working at 50-65 percent of capacity, this factory has adequate facilities to produce a maximum of seven aircraft a month.

- Two additional factories in Kuibyshev, suitable for production of 13 jet heavy bombers a month at peak rates, could initiate production in January 1956 and January 1957, respectively.

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- Considering that sufficient engines are available, these three facilities could produce 150 jet heavy bombers by mid-1956 and 225 by mid-1957. Of this total, 150 would probably be in operational units of the Soviet Long Range Air Force by 1957.

- Twenty B-52's, the American counterpart of the Soviet jet heavy bomber, have been produced to date. Present plans call for 140 to be produced by mid-1957.

- The Strategic Air Command will have received 11 B-52's by August and expects to have its first B-52 unit operational by the last quarter of 1956.

- The new Soviet four-engine turboprop aircraft could be intended for use as a cargo or aerial tanker. As a tanker, it could provide Soviet Long Range Aviation with a degree of flexibility not hitherto possessed. No production estimates were made for this aircraft.

2. It is understood that the above material was presented to Air Secretary Talbot and Deputy Defense Secretary Anderson.

HUNTINGTON D. SHELDON
Assistant Director,
Current Intelligence

cc. Executive Secretary NSC

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